

REMARKS

After the above amendments, claims 1-3, 5-15, and 17-41 are pending. Claims 1, 6, 7, 11, 13 and 18 are independent, and claims 21-41 are new.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 8, and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,242,708 to Marchand et al. The Examiner also rejected claims 5, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17 and 20 as being unpatentable over the Marchand et al. patent, either alone or in combination with U.S. Patent No. 4,272,687 to Borkan. The Examiner further indicated that claims 4, 6, 7, 13, 16, 18, and 19 contained allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten into independent form.

Applicant has amended the claims to address the Examiner's rejections. First, claims 6, 7, 13, and 18 have been amended to place them into independent form. Accordingly, these claims are now allowable. Second, with respect to independent claims 1 and 11, Applicant has amended these claims to incorporate the limitations from claims 4 and 16, respectively, into these claims. Since the Examiner indicated that claims 4 and 16 contained allowable subject matter, Applicant asserts that claims 1 and 11 are now allowable.

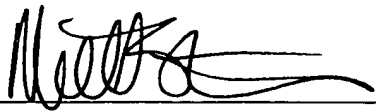
Claims 21-41 have been added to define further features of the present invention. These claims, as well as the remaining claims that have not been individually discussed, depend from one of the above-discussed claims, and are therefore allowable as well.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number indicated below.

Appl. No. 10/759,086
Amdt. dated August 27, 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 28, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

Date: August 27, 2004



Michael E. Stimson
Reg. No. 41,333
Attorney for Applicant

Roylance, Abrams, Berdo & Goodman, L.L.P.
1300 19th Street, N.W., Suite 600
Washington, D.C. 20036-2680
(202) 659-9076